

CITATION

COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION AWARD

MOUNT RAINIER RECOVERY INITIATIVE

In recognition of critical and timely assistance provided through the Mount Rainier Recovery Initiative, coordinated by the Student Conservation Association in response to the severe rain event at Mount Rainier National Park in November 2006.

The Student Conservation Association-Mount Rainier partnership was born out of disaster when 18 inches of rain fell on Mount Rainier in 36 hours beginning November 6, 2006. The resulting floods throughout the Park swept away roads, trails, utility lines, and whole campgrounds, causing damage estimated at \$36 million. In response, the Student Conservation Association created the Mount Rainier Recovery Initiative, working with the Park and a coalition of nonprofit organizations, to raise awareness, recruit volunteers, and to enlist the help of the business community. The Association and the Park recruited conservation interns to support flood recovery efforts, organized high school trail reconstruction crews for 2- to 4-week periods, and brought in staff and interns as crew leaders for teams of volunteers. During the summer of 2007, over 700 people worked on more than 100 projects, both within the Park and on neighboring U.S. Forest Service land. Thanks to the Initiative, volunteer contributions reduced flood recovery costs and helped preserve wilderness values by completing work with traditional hand tools instead of power equipment.

The Student Conservation Association's Initiative is largely responsible for the near doubling of Mount Rainier's volunteer program from 2006 to 2007. More than half of the trail work at Mount Rainier in 2007 was completed by volunteers. Less tangible, but even more important, are partnerships and relationships cultivated by the Association through its Initiative. Volunteers had satisfying, meaningful experiences. Many returned for multiple projects and expressed great interest in returning in future years.

For its groundbreaking partnership with Mount Rainier National Park in providing extensive aid following a disastrous rain event, the Student Conservation Association's Mount Rainier Recovery Initiative is granted the Cooperative Conservation Award of the Department of the Interior.

Secretary of the Interior